REFORMATION TODAY '87

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Hebden Bridge

Hebden Bridge is a small town nestling in a beautiful valley through which flows the river Calder. The valley is a scenic delight. Winding along, as friends, run the river, a canal, the railway and the road. There is in England the notorious North South divide, which is an economic divison (see p. 31). It is said that the rich live in the south and the poor in the north. The jobs are in the south and unemployment is the scourge of the north. The north was very much the centre of the industrial revolution, but the textile mills are now mostly derelict and other industries have failed to be adequate.

With regard to the Reformed Faith the south seems to be more favoured than the north. During the sixties it was wondered whether the Reformed Faith would ever again take root in the north. The situation has improved greatly. If every area of the north was like Hebden Bridge there would be reason for optimism spiritually and economically. Money has been invested and the town has improved tremendously in appearance. Small businesses have taken root to make up for the decay of the old mills of a past age, some of which remain as historic buildings. Unemployment in Hebden Bridge has dropped from twelve percent to eight percent. In some areas of the north it is fourteen percent – and in inner city areas much worse than that!

Seven people were baptised by John Kershaw in the river at Hebden Bridge way back on a cold November day in 1839. A church was planted and grew so that in 1882 a fine sanctuary was erected, known as Zion Chapel. The building can seat about 250. That same church was packed to capacity on May 18th for the funeral service of the pastor Dick Eccles. Having trained under David Kingdon at the Irish Baptist College, Pastor Eccles went to Zion Chapel when there was only one member, Miss Florrie Walton. During the time of decline when other churches shut down, this remarkable lady kept the work going for a number of years inspired by the text Jeremiah 32:27. The church had been built up under Pastor Eccles ministry to such an extent that work has begun to plant a new church at Halifax, which is a very needy town spiritually. Halifax is eight miles away and has a population of 70,000.

I spent the weekend of April 11th and 12th ministering at Hebden Bridge. Pastor Eccles had suffered bad health for years. Nevertheless it came as a shock when he died just a month later. Rosemary, his wife, is a Senior Community Medical Officer. There are three children. The family intends to remain in Hebden Bridge. The main responsibility for the work now falls on the shoulders of Martin Howell, an elder. We need to pray that a full-time pastor who is suitably gifted will carry on this work with energy and vision, and especially continue the pioneering work in Halifax.

Cover picture – *David Ellis surrounded by friends from the Grace Baptist Church, Dublin, who travelled to Cuckfield to be present at the induction service. See report on page 32.*

Editorial

Pastor, how do I know I will be saved? If Judas was lost, and if Demas went back on his faith, how do I know that I will be saved? How do I know whether I will fall short of salvation? Is it not possible that my case is that of Hebrews 6:4-6? 'Pastor' exclaimed a student, 'how do I know I will be saved?' 'Look,' he said, 'at Hebrews 6:4-6. I may have enlightenment, have tasted of Christ, shared in the Holy Spirit, tasted of the goodness of the word of God, and the powers of the coming age, and after all that fall away and prove to be unregenerate. Is not that a terrifying prospect?' 'Yes,' was my reply, 'it is, but it need not be for the simple reason that the New Testament emphasises that Christians can, and should, possess a strong assurance. The same letter of Hebrews which deals forthrightly with those Jews going back on their faith, in the same chapter six speaks of a full assurance of hope.'

We should note that assurance is always linked to diligence. 'We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure' (6:11). Perseverance is of the essence of the matter (10:36). Perhaps the clearest statement of all is that provided by Peter in his second letter and the first chapter. 'If you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (1:11). 'These things,' refer to verses 5 to 7, adding to faith: goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.

But surely that is to teach that we are saved by our doing, that is by our good works? I answer, 'No!' The gift of salvation includes the means of it. Not only do we receive the gift of Christ's righteousness by which we are justified, but we also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit by whose work within us we are enabled to will and do God's good pleasure. Sanctification is every bit as much the gift of God as justification. It is true that we are involved by way of activity. Salvation is through faith in its reception, and to faith in its outworking, for the justified shall live by faith. We are partners with the triune God in sanctification with regard to its progress and development. 'Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling' (Phil 2:12; cf Rom 6:17 and 2 Cor 3:18), but we are not partners as far as the gift of grace is concerned. In that respect we are recipients only.

It is possible for a believer to sin grievously. That will bring him chastisement and correction, which may be very painful. His sin may also have a devastating effect upon his assurance. It is patently clear throughout the Bible that we are responsible (let 1 Cor 3:12-15 speak for all the rest). We can never escape the broad dimensions of our responsibility. The teaching of the Holy Spirit guarantees that we should depend always on divine grace, yet at the same time we must never be careless with regard to our own effort. Salvation is by grace alone, but is accompanied by that perseverance which is all a part of the whole package of salvation by grace (Eph 2:1-10). God's workmanship results in workers who work at their salvation.

Gary Phillips is to be thanked for one of the finest expositions we have published in the magazine. Please read his exposition with an open Bible. You may not take it all in at one sitting. As the author says, the passage has exercised the minds of the greatest believing intellects. Do not be discouraged if you do not grasp all the issues immediately.

Falling Short of Salvation

An Exposition of Hebrews 6:1-9

by Gary Phillips

There are some passages in Scripture which taken in isolation might seem to suggest that a person, once regenerate, can fall away from his position in Christ and suffer eternal perdition. One such passage is Hebrews 6:1-9, which has puzzled scholars through the centuries. This article is written for those who may be troubled and perplexed over it.

I propose dividing the passage into three sections as follows:

1 Various views and early clues 6:1-3.
2 The heart of the matter 6:4-6.
3 The marks of a true Christian 6:7-9.

HEBREWS 6:1-3 VARIOUS VIEWS AND EARLY CLUES

What are the different ways of dealing with this passage?

There are four possible ways of interpreting this passage:

The Classic Arminian view

It would be foolish to dismiss this view as the voice of a tiny minority. It has commanded a large and influential following. It was held by the early Remonstrants (later to be anathametised at the Council of Dort 1618-19); the Wesleyan Methodists, following the Wesley brothers; Roman Catholics; Lutherans; the Salvation Army; the Holiness Churches; and some Pentecostalists. This view teaches that it is possible for a person to be truly born again and yet for some reason or other lose his faith and be damned forever. One Pentecostal denomination, the Apostolic Church, makes this doctrine a condition of church membership. Wesley even goes as far as to say so, 'To retain the grace of God is much more than to gain it. Hardly one in three does this!'[1]

However, to accept this teaching is to contradict and invalidate other statements of Scripture, and we must therefore dismiss this notion as utterly wrong. Let me mention just a few passages which clearly show the poverty of this position (Ps 37:28; Jer 32:40; Mal 3:6; Lk 22:32; Jn 10:27-29; Rom 8:37-39; 11:29; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Phil 1:6; 2 Tim 2:19; 1 Jn 2:19, 27; Jude 1).

The Suppositional Hypothesis

This view, which can claim the support of such Baptist heavyweights as C. H. Spurgeon, A. H. Strong and more recently E. F. Kevan, is based upon the suppositional or hypothetical 'if', following the King James Version. Alas, 'if' is not in the original, but to be fair to this exposition, the evangelical Anglican theologian Professor P. E. Hughes (though rejecting such a view himself), admits that 'the conditional sense is quite justifiable'.[2] This is the translation which the NIV surprisingly adopts. It is the exegesis favoured by K. S. Wuest, who asserts that 'The participle is a conditional participle here presenting a hypothetical case, a straw man'.[3] But, as P. E. Hughes has rightly observed, 'What . . . would be the point of warning them of the danger of apostasy and then assuring them that, after all, they are in no danger of falling into apostasy'?[4] None at all, for as F. F. Bruce has rightly stated, 'The warning of this passage was a real warning against a

real danger'.[5]

The Rowell theory

I have called this position after Dr J. B. Rowell, who, so far as I am able to determine, was the first to advance the view that whereas Hebrews 6:4-6 describes a Christian, the context of the passage is not loss of salvation but loss of reward. This is also the view of R. T. Kendall, who summarising this position, concludes that 'such people were saved but had nothing to accompany salvation viz no reward'.[6] While I acknowledge the ingenuity and novelty of this exposition, I am totally unconvinced by its argument. One obvious reason for dismissing it must surely be that it is fruit which accompanies salvation, and not rewards. Rewards are given at the end of a race, not during it!

The Reformed Calvinistic approach

This view is succinctly set out in the Westminster Confession of Faith. 'They, whom God has accepted in the Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly perservere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.'

In the history of interpretation this view has become the standard orthodox one, and an impressive and formidable array of names may be cited as its champions. This doctrine that has been held by Augustine, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Owen, Whitefield, Toplady and Martyn Lloyd-Jones, has been faithfully proclaimed by the early Church Fathers, the English and Continental Reformers, the English Puritans, and the Scottish Covenanters. It has been supported by the great councils, confessions and commentators of the Christian Church, is the belief of present-day churches in the evangelical reformed tradition, and of a growing number of Christians in churches which have been traditionally hostile to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. It is also the subject of the great hymns of the church, e.g. the Anglican evangelical Augustus Toplady (1740-78).

> My name from the palms of his hands,
> Eternity will not erase,
> Impressed on his heart it remains
> In marks of indelible grace,
> Yes, I to the end shall endure,
> As sure as the earnest is given;
> More happy, but not more secure
> The glorified spirits in heaven.

Do verses 6:1-3 refer to a different group of persons from those in verses 6:4-6?

I answer yes. Unfortunately this is a point missed by so many in their expositions. It is quite clear from a comparison of 6:1-3 where the first person plural (us and we) is used, and 6:4-6, where there is a dramatic and deliberate change to the third person plural (those, they and them) that the writer is concerned to distinguish between two entirely different groups within the Church, believers and unbelievers. Let me stress this point. Our author is writing to a mixed congregation, and it is important that we keep this in mind if we are to arrive at a correct understanding of the passage. Whether he directly addressed those of 6:4-6 is not at all clear. It may be that they had already left the church (Heb 10:25; cf 1 Jn 2:19).

Do verses 6:1-3 describe Jewish or Christian acts?

On this expositors are sharply and evenly divided. Both views are well argued, and there is very little to choose between them. However, I accept the first interpretation, for it seems highly significant that the writer does not make mention of anything exclusively, peculiarly, or specifically Christian, such as the atonement, the Holy Spirit, regeneration, sanctification, justification by faith, or any other distinctively Christian doctrine. In fact what we have

here is a list of teachings that are entirely consistent with Judaistic belief. This too is the view of F. F. Bruce who remarks, 'When we consider the "rudiments" one by one, it is remarkable how little in the list is distinctive of Christianity, for practically every item could have its place in a fairly orthodox Jewish community. Each of them, indeed, acquires a new significance, in a Christian context; but the impression we get is that existing Jewish beliefs and practices were used as a foundation on which to build Christian truth'.[7] The *Translator's Handbook* in a footnote suggests that 'perhaps "Christ" in this context has the wider meaning "Messiah", so that the "elementary teaching about the Messiah" could be partly, perhaps entirely, Jewish teaching, which the readers have received before they became Christian'.[8]

HEBREWS 6:4-8 THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Does the writer describe Christian or non-Christian graces?

I hope to convince the reader that the author describes the latter and shows how far 'an individual may go in divine attainments – spiritual knowledge – eminent gifts – and even great usefulness, and yet retain the carnal mind, the rebellious will, the unhumbled and unbroken heart'.[9] We now examine the expressions used:

'Enlightened'

Some understand this term to be a synonym for baptism (the Syriac and Ethiopian versions), while others maintain it is a description of conversion. I do not accept either interpretation, but hold that it is a description, and an entirely accurate one at that, of many who hear and even understand all the glorious truths of the Christian faith yet despite this their 'enlightenment' falls short of salvation for the simple reason that they believe with the head only and not with the heart. Their belief is purely intellectual and not experimental, notional rather than spiritual. Oh! the tragedy of it, to know Christ to be Saviour but not as Saviour, to have light but not life, to be convinced but not converted. This is the very real danger which the writer of this epistle is warning his readers against, of knowing certain things about God, and biblical truths such as repentance, faith, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement, and yet still fall short of saving grace.

'Tasted'

Some (Owen, Watson, Strong and F. B. Meyer), want to give the word a superficial and artificial connotation, and by so doing assign to the word 'taste' the meaning 'to eat only a small amount of'. 'Tasting here,' wrote Watson, 'is opposed to eating. The hypocrite may have a kind of taste of the sweetness of religion, but his taste does not nourish.'[10] Another expositor remarks, 'It is not enough to taste the good word of God, Ezekiel ate the roll, John ate the little book, Jeremiah found the word and ate it.'[11] There are other expositors who understand taste in a strictly physical sense and go on to interpret the heavenly gift as the eucharist. However, we must reject both of these explanations. The best way to determine the real meaning of 'tasted' is to consider the use of the word elsewhere in Scripture. It is clear from Hebrews 2:9; Matthew 16:28; and John 8:52, that the meaning of 'taste' in the New Testament is 'to experience'.

'The heavenly gift'

There are many possible interpretations of this phrase. Among the various explanations suggested are the Holy Spirit, the eucharist, the Lord Jesus Christ and eternal life. Now it is not possible for us to say dogmatically and categorically which one is exegetically correct. The choice is a matter of personal preference. I am increasingly

persuaded that the real meaning of 'the heavenly gift' is in fact the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the explanation of this verse may be stated thus – a person may have a credal knowledge of Christ, and subscribe to all the wondrous truths concerning him, he may believe as some Jews did in the Gospel of John (8:30) and yet not belong to God (v. 47), 'always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth' (2 Tim 3:7). He may have an intellectual, academic and theoretical knowledge but not a saving knowledge. He may know of him, indeed know all about him, but not know him in a real, intimate and personal way.

'Tasted the goodness of the word of God'

How do we interpret this? Whenever the gospel is preached there will always be those who experience some of its effects. Their consciences have been pricked, their emotions touched, their souls stirred, their hearts strangely warmed, and their minds arrested by powerful, persuasive and anointed preaching. They have been upset, disquieted, discomforted and disturbed by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit of God, and yet they remain unconverted. The effect of the gospel upon them is merely outward, temporary and superficial rather than inward, permanent and real.

'Partakers of the Holy Ghost' (AV)

We now come to deal with perhaps the most difficult phrase of the entire New Testament, and so it is not surprising that many are greatly troubled and genuinely confused over it. There are some expositors who tell us that the phrase 'partakers of the Holy Ghost' (AV) is a description of a Christian. I disagree with that interpretation and hope to show that it is more appropriate to the context to understand the phrase as referring to a non-Christian. Let me begin with what is undoubtedly the best commentary on these words. It is Matthew 7:22-23, 'Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons, and perform many miracles?" '[12]

From this passage alone, it should be clear that spiritual gifts are not proof or guarantee of the person's salvation, for our Lord goes on to say 'I never knew you'. A Christian is known by his fruit and not by his gifts. As one writer has put it, 'Great gifts are like the carpenter's tools; they mislead many to assume the man is a carpenter without considering what he has produced'.[12] All of this goes to show that it is possible to be partakers of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but not of his graces, to be as J. I. Packer has well said, 'capable of performances that benefit others and yet be a stranger to the Spirit-wrought inner transformation that the knowledge of God brings'.[13]

Let me show from Scripture that this is indeed biblical. Let us look firstly at the case of Balaam. Balaam was of course a false prophet. If anyone should doubt this he should turn to Numbers 24:1 for the evidence. Yet astonishingly we go on to read in the very next verse that 'the Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied'. Here then is an account of the Spirit of God, contrary to popular belief, giving outstanding charismatic gifts to one who is a stranger to the covenant of grace.

The Spirit of God can and indeed does endow the unsaved with unusual and remarkable charismatic gifts. There is the classic case of Saul (1 Sam 10:10), given the gift of prophecy and yet not given true or saving faith. This truth is not confined to the Old Testament, for when we come to the New we find exactly the same thing. There is of course the well-known case of Judas Iscariot who was unquestionably among those of Mark 6:12-13 who went

out and preached that people should repent, and who drove out demons and anointed many sick with oil and healed them – and yet fell short of saving faith. Those folk who teach the final excision from the faith, of the true believer, insist that Judas was truly saved. However, I answer unhesitatingly, along with Arthur Pink (1886-1952), that 'it was not from saving grace Judas "fell" but from "ministry and apostleship"'[14] (Acts 1:25). It is evident from Scripture that Judas was elected to temporary office and not to eternal salvation. It is very important that we should be clear about this. Therefore, let me give you clear and convincing proof that Judas was untouched by regenerating grace. It is found in John 13:18 where the context (v.5) will reveal that Christ was addressing all his disciples, yet he declares, 'I am not referring to you all, I know whom I have chosen.'

There is no scriptural evidence whatsoever to prove that Balaam, Saul or Judas Iscariot ever had a real experience of God's saving grace, but they were simply called and chosen to fulfil a particular purpose in the will of God. Let us not make the mistake that so many have that just because a person is used, inspired, given certain abilities, and endowed with remarkable gifts by the Spirit of God, he is necessarily a Christian. This is where people get themselves into trouble. They say, 'To imply that the Holy Spirit can use the ungodly in this way is unthinkable and nothing short of blasphemy'. But there is no difficulty in answering this objection. There are a number of replies:

Firstly, it is biblically supportable. We have made mention of Balaam, Saul and Judas. We may also cite Cyrus, Pharaoh and Caiphas as notable examples of God using the wicked to bring his purposes to pass. Let me drive this truth home by further appeal to the Word of God, with the following representative scriptural references 2 Kgs 24:2; 2 Chr 33:11; Job 1:12; Is 10:5-7; Jer 43:10; 51:20; Ez 38:14-23.

Secondly, it is entirely consistent with the sovereignty of God. The Bible declares that God can do as he pleases, when he pleases and with whom he pleases – and that includes unbelievers as well as believers!

'Powers of the world to come'

Let us first consider the term 'powers'. Fortunately there is no real difficulty here, and therefore the question need not detain us. It is commonly agreed that it is equivalent to 'signs and wonders' (cf Heb 2:4). But there is still another question to be asked. Does the expression 'world to come' have reference to the gospel age, or a future earthly millenium (Wuest), or perhaps to the eternal state? The future reference in the text is from the standpoint, not of the writer, but of the Old Testament. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that 'tasted' is in the past tense. In other words, 'the dynamic evidence of the activity of the Holy Spirit . . . particularly perhaps in miraculous healings and deliverances... testify to the fact that the "age to come" is already upon them, since its powers are operative in their midst'.[15] I conclude therefore that the 'age to come' is the age of the Messiah or the gospel age, or the period between the first and second advents of Christ.

What does it mean to fall away?

There are those who would have us believe that it means to fall away from a state and experience of true and saving grace and be everlastingly lost. Such a view however is clearly abominated by Scripture, and has quite rightly never attained the status of orthodoxy within mainstream Evangelicalism. One commentator has well said, 'The only falling from grace which is recognised in Scripture is not the falling of the regenerate,

but the falling of the unregenerate, from influences tending to lead them to Christ'.[16] To put it another way, the passage does not teach the possibility of falling from grace, but falling short of grace. As G. S. Bishop has put it, a man may 'fall not from grace, but from lack of it',[17] and consequently the author is eager that 'none miss the grace of God' (Heb 12:15). The readers were in danger of missing salvation, rather than having it and then losing it. It is quite clear from this passage that it is possible to have heard and understood the glorious truths of the Christian faith, to have enjoyed the great privileges, blessings and advantages of the gospel, to be in a state of seeming grace, and to even display the outward signs of faith, to be used in gifts of power, and have remarkable experiences, and yet still fall short of salvation. It shows as Matthew Henry has written, 'how far persons may go in religion, and after all, fall away, and perish forever',[18] or as William Gouge has put it, 'the apostle sheweth how far such as fall away may ascend upon the ladder to salvation and withal how far they may fall thence'.[19] This seems to me the best way to understand this admittedly difficult phrase. We conclude this exposition of the phrase by saying along with John Owen that, 'here is no express mention of any covenant grace or mercy in them or towards them, nor of any duty of faith or obedience which they had performed'.[20] John Gill adds, 'There is nothing said of them that is peculiar to believers; not a word of their faith in Christ; nor of their being begotten again to a lively hope; nor of their being justified by the righteousness of Christ; nor of their being the sons of God by faith in Christ; nor of their being sealed by the Holy Spirit of God; nor of their being made meet to be partakers of the heavenly inheritance – What is said of them, are what may be found in persons destitute of the grace of God'.[21]

Why is it impossible to be brought back to repentance?

The answer to this question will depend largely on how we translate the present participle 'crucifying'. If we translate it as a causal 'since' (RSV, Moffatt); 'for' (NEB, Phillips); 'seeing that' (AV, RV); or 'because' (NIV); the verse is made to say that repentance is impossible and falling away irrevocable (Wuest). On the other hand, if we are to adopt the contemporary and temporal 'while' (ASV, ARV margin, NIV footnote); it helps us to understand the meaning of the verses within the context of the overall teaching of Scripture. This is, not that it is impossible to be brought back to repentance under any circumstance, backsliding included (in reply see Rev 2:5), but that it is impossible to be brought back to repentance 'while', or as long as, they continue to offer sacrifices under the Judaistic system.

HEBREWS 6:7-9 THE MARKS OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN

Are there two different grounds that are meant in verse 7, the one good, the other bad, or simply the one and the same ground with two different results?

Some expositors take verses 7 and 8 as referring to two different classes of Christians. They arrive at this conclusion by arguing that the text refers to only one ground (a believer), that produces two different results (eternal blessing and eternal judgement). However, I am forced to disagree with that exposition. What we have here is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian, represented in the text by two entirely different grounds that produce two entirely different outcomes (eternal blessing and eternal judgement). Dr M. Lloyd-Jones is of the same mind. He says, 'There are two types of earth, the same rain falls upon both, and they belong to the same Master. But the results are very different, because the earth is very different'.[22] This is the explanation

favoured by John Brown (1784-1858). He states, 'The two classes among the Hebrews are figuratively described as two fields, subjected to the same culture but producing very different crops – the one, a crop of good grain; the other, a crop of briars and thorns; the one showing that it is blessed by God with fruitfulness, the other given reason to fear that it is cursed by him with barrenness. The emblem is a field often rained upon, and drinking in the rain. This is a very significant emblem of a person who has long enjoyed the means of Christianity, and who has made such a use of these means, as to obtain a knowledge of that religion sufficient to induce him to make a profession of it.'[23]

What are the better things that accompany salvation?

There is an aprocryphal story told of a learned man who while walking through an orchard one windy day came to a fence which separated the orchard from a nearby forest. He imagined hearing the different kinds of trees talking to each other. Some rather noble maple trees boasted to the fruit trees, 'Your leaves don't rustle in the wind like ours so that they can be heard afar off.' The fruit trees replied, 'We don't need your useless flutterings to draw attention to ourselves. Our fruit speaks for us!'

What then of us? Are we producing fruit in keeping with repentance? (Matt 3:8). Does our fruit speak for us? According to Scripture, fruit (the quality of life), is the test and evidence of an authentic Christian experience. (Cf Matt 12:33; 21:43.)

CONCLUSION

To reject the doctrine of the perserverance of the saints would of course have a domino effect on other biblical doctrines. The first to fall would be the doctrine of justification by faith (replaced by justification by works). Next to go would be adoption (replaced by fostering). Finally assurance (replaced by an ungodly fear). On the other hand, to accept the doctrine of the saints certain continuance in the faith will add comfort, strength, security and purpose to the Christian's life and experience.

Footnotes

1 John Wesley, *Journal,* July 1774.
2 *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews,* P. E. Hughes, footnote p. 212, W. B. Eerdmans 1977,
3 *Hebrews Six in the Greek New Testament,* Kenneth S. Wuest. Article Bibliotheca Sacra, January 1962, p. 52.
4 *Op. cit.* P. E. Hughes, p. 212.
5 *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* F. F. Bruce.
6 *Once Saved, Always Saved,* R. T. Kendall, Hodder and Stoughton 1983, p. 133.
7 *Op. cit.* F. F. Bruce, p. 112.
8 *A Translator's Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews,* p. 109, UBS 1983.
9 *The Work of the Holy Spirit,* Octavius Winslow, Banner of Truth 1972, p. 39.
10 *A Body of Divinity,* Thomas Watson, Banner of Truth, p. 283.
11 Letter to William Huntington, *Zion's Witness,* p. 242.
12 Article 'Love the Essential', Rev. Norman Reid, *Evangelical Presbyterian Magazine,* June/July 1986, p. 7.
13 *Keep in Step with the Spirit,* J. I. Packer, Baker, p. 110.
14 *Eternal Security,* Arthur W. Pink, Baker, p. 110.
15 *Op. cit.,* P. E. Hughes, p. 211.
16 *Systematic Theology,* Augustus Hopkin Strong, p. 884.
17 *The Doctrines of Grace,* George S. Bishop, Baker 1977, p. 140.
18 *Matthew Henry's Commentary,* Marshall, Morgan and Scott 1970, p. 714.
19 *Commentary on Hebrews,* William Gouge, Kregel Limited Edition Library 1980, p. 396.
20 *Sin and Grace,* John Owen, Vol 7 Banner of Truth, p. 17.
21 Gill's *Body of Divinity,* volume 11, Baker, p. 172.
22 *Romans Ch. 8:17-39,* Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Banner of Truth 1975, p. 328.
23 *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* John Brown, Banner of Truth 1972, p. 298.

Dr. William Hendriksen, left, and Dr. Cornelius Van Til, long time friends

Cornelius Van Til 1895-1987

Some Personal Memories

by Austin Walker

On April 17th 1987 Dr Cornelius Van Til died at the age of 91 following an illness that had lasted several months. He was Professor of Apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, from its inception in 1929 until his retirement in 1972. I was one of his many students, attending the seminary from 1968-1971.

What sort of man was he? How do I remember him after nearly twenty years when I first sat in his class with fifty or so other new students? Four indelible impressions remain.

1 The teacher in his classroom

Here my memories will be similar to nearly all his students, but it is worth telling for those who never experienced his lectures. His style of teaching was all his

own. I recall being 'all at sea' to begin with, having only a rudimentary knowledge of the history of ideas and particular philosophers. Van Til repeated himself often, but never in a dull and boring fashion, in order to bring home to us the radical differences between Christian and non-Christian thinking. If someone asked a question he would go over the same ground in a different way. You rarely had a brief answer however brief the question. His lessons were 'chalk and talk'. They would never have been the same with modern contrivances like an overhead projector. Van Til would never have been able to get all the information on one sheet! By the end of the class the blackboard would be covered with untidy graffiti. He rarely rubbed anything out. If he did he would do so with his hand. He had no time to reach for an eraser. On that blackboard would be the history of philosophy, or Christian thought summarised in names and phrases, often in a variety of languages. Somewhere among all this would be the famous two circles. A big one for the Creator and the other small one for creation. There was no confusion or mixing of the two. The Creator/creature distinction was fundamental to biblical Christian thinking.

Perhaps this conveys a picture of confusion. But he had a method. Often it was not the details that mattered so much but the overall impact. My own class notes are very brief, but he expected his students to read and write extensively. My three essays on 'The Theistic Proofs', 'Reason and Revelation', and 'Common Grace', required nearly a hundred typewritten quarto sheets in total, and because of my lack of training in philosophy, well over 3,500 pages of reading. In those papers I systematised my own thinking. I could not have done too badly because he gave me good grades! But we all used to wonder whether he read these essays. He would be watched intently by some as he waded through them in the library. The professor was a very quick reader!

2 Outside of the classroom

You rarely saw Dr Van Til alone on the campus unless he was writing or marking in the library. On the way to lectures and especially after classes he always had a group of students in conversation with him. In answering questions he was always gracious, friendly and humble, even with those who disagreed with him. He never seemed to tire. He must have been asked many of the same questions in those forty-three years but you never felt he was impatient. You and your question mattered to him.

One of the traditions of the then residents of Machen Hall was to invite guests to the Dining Club. Dr Van Til and his wife were often invited and he would never fail to entertain us afterwards with a short speech. It was marked by a personal warmth and wit even though he was into his seventies. He clearly enjoyed every moment of his time with us.

3 The man of prayer

I never liked to be late for his class. Apart from showing a lack of respect, I would miss his opening prayer. To do so was to miss a privilege. For him prayer never

seemed a formality. Though he could baffle us with complex arguments his prayers were marked by childlikeness and simplicity. He was a man who knew his God.

I recall a day of prayer at the seminary. Dr Van Til rose to lead us in prayer. In a slightly quivering voice, due to his age, he prayed. The content of his prayer I cannot remember, but I for one felt ushered into the holy and gracious presence of God. After he had finished I hesitated to open my eyes because I was not sure if I was in heaven or on earth.

4 The preacher

Dr Van Til was a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and worshipped at Glenside, adjacent to the seminary. I attended there for a while but I do not recall him preaching there. He did preach at seminary chapel services and it was also his privilege to preach to incoming and outgoing students. The latter I remember best of all on graduation days. They were held on the lawns behind Machen Hall. Aware that in the congregation there would be many parents, relatives and friends of students, who were not Christians, he would hold forth the Lord Jesus Christ with a passion, warmth and urgency that made compelling listening. Listening to this white-haired saint there was something deeply moving, as deeply concerned for the souls of men he preached the word of life. Some years later I recall seeing a photograph of him, still preaching, this time in the open air in New York with some other faculty members and students.

If you have only read or tried to read some of his books and syllabi you may have the idea that Van Til was academic and aloof, dealing mainly with complex ideas. That is not a fair picture, and I hope my personal reflections will give readers a more balanced picture.

His contribution to Christian apologetics

Dr Van Til concluded that many Christian apologetics compromised by trying to find some neutral common ground between the believer and the unbeliever. This he denied vigorously on the basis of Romans 1:18-20, which states that all men do know God but hold down the truth in deliberate unrighteousness. By conceding neutral territory he claimed men were being given the impression that they could decide truth independently of the self-revelation of the triune God of the Scriptures. He focused on the role of presuppositions in apologetics, the radical antithesis between the two outlooks of the Christian and the non-Christian, and the point of contact between believers and non-believers, namely man as made in God's image.

We give thanks to God for the life of Cornelius Van Til. He was a man of God, devoted to the cause of truth, Christ and his Church. There was something of a prophetic urgency and passion in his person and preaching. His concern was to bring every thought into obedience to the self-attesting Christ of Scripture. I for one owe him a great deal, because he helped me towards that goal at a crucial stage in my own life as a young Christian.

Healings and Prophecies?

The great division

The Charismatic Movement continues to be the greatest cause of division in the Church since Liberalism. The ground and reason for division shifts from one subject to the next. The new vogue of worship causes division. The claim to speak in tongues also causes division. As I will illustrate presently, the claim that prophecies should continue in the Church is causing division. In addition, there is the subject of miraculous healing, which adds a further dimension for division among believers. Dr Peter C. Wagner of Fuller Seminary predicts that healing will be next in line for major attention in the Church worldwide.[1] An influential book promoting the idea that miraculous healing should be the right arm of evangelism is well-known, namely, *Power Evangelism,* by John Wimber. Wimber advocates that miracles demonstrate the power of the gospel and should accompany the gospel. This sounds convincing, but what about the reality of the miracles? When people are not healed they are told that it is because they lack faith.

A well-known evangelical minister attended a Wimber rally here in Liverpool and reported to a group of Christian workers that he believed it to be satanic. Not one Scripture was expounded, he said, and he expressed horror that in good faith he had taken members of his church to the meeting.

Two experienced Christians from our membership during May attended a rally at Aintree Racecourse which was led by a supposed miracle worker from Nigeria, Archbishop Dr Benson Idahosa. The content, as far as gospel preaching was concerned, they reported as nil. That was on the first evening. One man threw away his walking stick and danced with the preacher. One lady got out of her wheelchair 'totteringly' (so she was not really healed?), manoeuvred the archbishop into her wheelchair and gave him a ride around the stage while the crowd enjoyed the spectacle with great hilarity! When Dr Idahosa called for people to come to the front, it was for Jesus to do things for those who needed his help, such as giving up smoking or alcohol. He said he would not begin to pray until another twenty came to the front (so much for the sovereign power of the Spirit!). When eventually he did pray he introduced some salvation truth in his prayer.

The next night our reporter was accompanied by a different companion who is also an experienced member of our church. This time there was some biblical content in the preaching but very weak and repetitive. There was a call for testimonies. One lady came forward and said she had the previous night been healed of her smoking habit. More dramatically another lady said that she had been healed of twelve years of alcoholism the previous night. This miracle had happened when she had touched the hem of the archbishop's robe. We certainly hope that she has been delivered from her addiction. However the proof can surely come only through the test of time. The brother who attended both nights said that when he read the report by Anthony Coppin in the last issue of this magazine (*RT* 97), he found that the spirit described in that report was identical to the spirit permeating the meetings he had attended.

A new gospel healing centre has opened in Liverpool and the surrounding area

circulated with invitations to come for healing. Is the warning ever given that if you are not healed then it is because you lack faith! If failure lies with the sick in every case then anyone can have a go at healing without bearing personal responsibility. We never have to carry responsibility on that basis. But what happens if a record is kept of all the people whose hopes are raised by the gospel and are then disappointed? What kind of good news is that? If the goods are not delivered for healing then how can they be delivered for the saving of the soul? If God is unreliable in one area then it follows he is unreliable in another.

God does promise salvation and his requirements are repentance and faith. The faith must be a faith which unites the soul with Christ Jesus his Son. That promise is made to every creature on earth, but nowhere does God say that he will heal. The great commission is not, 'Go to all nations and heal diseases', but 'go and disciple all nations' (Mt 28:19,20). And when you have baptised believers it does not say 'heal their diseases', but, 'teach them to obey everything I have commanded you'! We may follow biblical procedures and seek his will in the matter of healing but there is no such thing as automatic healing or an infallible healing gift in any person. Every great self-proclaimed healer today from Oral Roberts to John Wimber has a list of failures stretching from here to Australia. If healing is an automatic gift then Paul the apostle did not know about it because he experienced much anxiety with regard to Epaphroditus who nearly died of an illness when he visited Paul in Rome. Paul left Trophimus at Miletus sick (2 Tim 4:20).

My view is that it is impossible to predict the strategies Satan will use to distract the Church and thereby hinder the real business of evangelism. Dr Wagner of Fuller Seminary may be right in his prediction, 'Faith healing by the year 2,000 will be as common a part of church life as Sunday school.'[2] On the other hand, by then the general population may be thoroughly fed up with the healing merchants, just as at the time of the Reformation the German people in particular had their eyes opened concerning the deceptions and deceits of Dr Tetzel, and his money-making indulgence-selling to line his own pockets and help to build St Peter's in Rome. If the tele-evangelist empire in the U.S.A. can collapse overnight then who is to say that the fraudulent nature of the healers will not be exposed? The press of today is well equipped with their cameras. We have recently seen something of their ability to film close-up. It will be excellent if we can have a thorough exposure of these so-called healings. Professional reporters are well equipped to track down the facts and especially adept at spotting cases that have been 'set up' before the meetings.

We all need to keep a record of the claims that are made of prophecy and of healings. When these turn out to be fraudulent it is our duty to document the truth. With regard to the meeting referred to, Archbishop Benson was haled as a prophet. He had, it was said, prophesied the rainbow that appeared in the sky that night. Unfortunately the man who said he had written it down could not find the piece of paper in his pocket. In the O.T. false prophets were stoned to death. The least we can do is insist on church discipline.

When Dr Wagner suggests the prominence of healing, reported in the last paragraph, he is making a conjecture. He is not making a prophecy! Prophecy is a subject that is causing division here in the U.K. For instance at the end of May, Achille Blaize, Reformed Baptist minister from London, was due to give expositions to

NEWS Simo Ralevic of Yugoslavia has hanging over his head an eight month prison sentence on false charges. His appeal to the supreme court is due to be heard in October and until then he is free. He has just returned from a energetic preaching tour in his homeland. He is in good heart despite the threat to his freedom.

Senior editor of the Banner of Truth, Mr. S. M. Houghton went to be with the Lord on June 19th aged 87. There is hardly an item published by the Banner including the magazine, which did not pass through the scrutiny of this exceptional and prodigious editor who was blessed with an encyclopaedic mind and memory, assisted by a personal library of about 30,000 books. He was strong to the end, his last illness (cancer) mercifully being brief.

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the prestigious O.I.C.C.U. (the Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union). The Union asked him to expound 2 Peter 1:12-21. This he did in the thorough way for which he is well known. He established his position on the basis of Scripture and backed it up with the 1689 Confession of Faith representing the faith of our Fathers. In making his application he asserted that the conclusion of the passage is that there is no further place for prophecy today. At the conclusion of the meeting the president said that the speaker had only given one interpretation and that he, the president, held another view. Brother Blaize responded by reasserting the message of the apostle Peter. The clash that took place is referred to by a letter from one of the students who wrote as follows:

> Dear Mr Blaize,
>
> Having been present at the Bible Reading which you delivered to the O.I.C.C.U. at the Northgate Hall in Oxford on Saturday, 23rd May, I felt compelled to write to you and express my sadness and regret for the shameful way in which you were treated on that occasion and my support for the particular stance which you adopted.
>
> I am sure that you were well aware that certain parts of your message would not be universally popular given the nature of many such inter-denominational bodies of Christians today, but I was pleased that you were not, as many are, deterred from delivering such a message. How many of the Old Testament prophets, and indeed even our Lord himself suffered much adverse reaction to what they had to say!
>
> Nevertheless, I do not think that the statement of the president which followed your message was at all appropriate, and regarded it as a grave insult to your position as a minister of God's word. In particular, the president did not make it clear to which part of your address he was referring, and I among others assumed initially that he was referring to the whole of your message, although we were later informed that this may not have been the case. I myself in the past few years have heard a number of things from speakers on the platform at the Northgate Hall with which I have not agreed and which have already contradicted Scripture, without any presidential statement of dissociation following. In addition, I felt that the whole atmosphere of the meeting was sadly hostile to your message throughout.
>
> Personally, I was delighted and thrilled to hear such a clear and uncompromising message on the authority of Scripture, although I fear that I was part of a small minority. At a time when there is so much talk of compromise in churches and Christian Unions alike, it was marvellous for the sole source and ground for our confidence in every aspect of our lives to be brought before us in such a clear and powerful way.
>
> I would hope that the executive committee of O.I.C.C.U. will be good enough to write to you and apologise for the way in which you were treated, and I and a number of others have written to them urging them to do so.
>
> May I express my thanks both to you and to the Lord for the encouragement and blessing which I personally received from your ministry on Saturday evening.

Footnotes

1 Cited from an article by Edward N. Gross, in the Canadian Magazine, *The Berean Ambassador,* February 1987.

2 *ibid.*

In arriving at a definition, What is a Christian? I have used the newly published book The Futures of Christianity *by David L. Edwards (1987), as a basis for discussion as to the general idea that prevails in society about what a Christian is. The book is an analysis of historical, contemporary and future trends within the worldwide Church, comprehending the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, in general, but including detailed discussion of countries like India and Japan. Buddhism, Islam and Judaism, come within the scope of the book. The secularisation of Christendom and the pressures of Communism are discussed as well as Christianity as it relates to the new science, the new politics, and the new morality. More detail about the author David Edwards will follow in the article. He believes passionately in Anglicanism as a model for a world-wide Church progressing to full unity under the leadership of the W.C.C., to embrace Rome, the Eastern Orthodox Communion, and all the rest, including evangelicalism which he regards as a virile part within the whole corpus of Christianity. He is pleased that more evangelicals are showing an interest in ecumenism. It is my contention in this article that we must begin by defining what we mean by Christian. Also we must be resolute in holding to the truth that our Lord prayed only for the unity of those joined to him by faith, that is genuine believers. Note that Edwards chooses to use the plural 'Futures' in his title.*

What is a Christian?

According to David L. Edwards in his book *The Futures of Christianity,*[1] those of all denominations who profess Christianity are Christians, including Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans. That there are true believers within all the main communions few would care to deny. But Edwards is a typical representative of the modern ecumenical movement which accepts the most nominal kind of profession as valid. In other words, people who bear the name Christian do not need to be converted.

On the basis of the widest possible espousal of all groups bearing the name Christian, and in their relationship to other religions, this 460-page volume provides a comprehensive and up-to-date perspective of what the future might hold for Christianity in all its forms, including evangelical Christianity.

As far as Christian unity is concerned Edwards focuses on baptism as the sacrament of participation in the life, death, resurrection and mission of Jesus.[2] He does not attempt to analyse the implications of this with regard to countless infants who are 'baptised' but who later have no Christian testimony other than nominal adherence to a denomination. If a chicken farmer knows anything at all he knows the difference between eggs and live chickens. If we are to know anything at all about real Christianity we will have to know the difference between those who are living Christians, and people whose only relationship to Christ is being on a church register.

Edwards himself is an avowed Anglican, and glories in the comprehensive nature of the Anglican denomination. That so wide a variety of views and interpretations can be included in the Anglican communion he finds advantageous. David Edwards was previously editor of the SCM Press. Among his past appointments he has been Chairman of Christian Aid, Speaker's Chaplain in the

House of Commons, and Dean of King's College, Cambridge.

Edwards vilifies the doctrine of eternal punishment,[3] and believes in a general salvation within non-Christian religions.[4] He declares that Christians 'can learn from Hindus how the life of a soul can end in union with Ultimate Reality'. That Hinduism teaches a man can be reborn to be a rat or a cockroach, he does not care to face. He proposes that 'the Muslim can teach the Christian about the unity and majesty of God and about the brotherhood of believers'.[5] That there is a mortal enmity against the Trinity and deity of Christ in the Muslim faith he is not bothered to pursue.

Edwards is typical of the ecumenical movement in teaching universalism. According to him the gospel of Christ is not the one and only way of salvation. He declares that, 'with his sovereign freedom God generously gives his help and his eternal welcome to all who sincerely seek him, including those who seek him by their loyal adherence to non-Christian religions'.[6] If this is so then why was it necessary for Jesus to suffer the way he did and why did he make propitiation for our sins? (1 Jn 2:2). In any case, according to ecumenicals like Edwards it does not matter, because a God of love is not going to damn anybody in the end. The business of seeking God for salvation is then not important, and so no sense of urgency is to be found in this large book.

A further feature of this typical ecumenical treatise is the omission of any attempt to come to terms with the doctrine of sin. It is essential to an understanding of the gospel that we realise man is alienated from God. Ungodliness is the root and cause of all unrighteousness. It is important to observe the apostle's insistence that no one by his sinful nature ever seeks the one and only triune God. 'There is no one who understands, not one who seeks God' (Rom 3:11). Entirely absent in David Edwards' presentation is any portrayal of the holiness of God. Yet our concept of God is basic to everything. The God who is holy, that is the God of the Bible, will never compromise on the issue of sin.

David Edwards is fully aware that his views contradict the uniqueness of Christ and his gospel, and seeks to make up for this by flattery in praising Christ's love and teaching.[7] His way of thinking, typical of liberalism and the ecumenical movement, ends up with 'the social gospel'. The teaching of Christ is reduced to moralism, the task of making the world a better place. Thus the gospel is relegated from being God's way of salvation to being one of many religions which can be used to make people happy and better, and maybe even good.

This brings us face to face with the question, Can one be a Christian and flatly contradict Christ? Can one call Christ mistaken in one breath and praise his teaching in another? Can one be a Christian merely by picking and choosing bits of the Bible that suit one's own human thinking? The answer is no! To be a Christian is to believe and accept the teaching of Jesus Christ who said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the father but by me' (Jn 14:6). The apostle Peter insisted, 'Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). John expressed the same truth by declaring, 'he who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life' (1 Jn 5:12). It is a delusion to think you can deny that salvation is found only in the atonement of Christ and yet still try to maintain you are a Christian, which is the position Edwards maintains. How can you say, 'I do not rely only on the

death of Christ for my salvation, yet I think Jesus was a good teacher, therefore I am a Christian!'

What is a Christian?

The apostle Paul's favourite way of expressing what is a Christian is to use the term 'in Christ', which he does 160 times. This concept has its genesis in John 15 where our Lord speaks about himself as 'the true vine' and says, 'Remain in me, and I will remain in you' (Jn 15:4). Union with Christ brings union with the Trinity. Hence the formula for baptism, 'baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.

The expression 'in Christ' points us to the fact that God himself defines what a Christian is. The most common idea today is that a Christian is one who has had a 'born again' experience. Of course if we think in biblical terms that is correct, but the idea of the new birth has been so weakened, particularly in North America that it is virtually meaningless. The term 'born again' is being used in the U.K. not only for Christianity but for anything that has a dynamic. Hence we get a born-again motor car! Recently a soccer team that managed to avoid relegation was described as a born-again team. However, a new lease of life whether religious or physical, can be short-lived or very shallow. In America a politician has only to say a few kind words about God and there will be those who jump to the conclusion that he must be 'born again'.

So, how are we to define a Christian? Indeed with so many different notions is it possible to produce a definition that is compelling? I suggest that the solution lies in being objective. In other words let us enquire what God himself says about this matter.

God's power and wisdom is unveiled in his method of justification (Rom 1:16-17). When a person is joined by faith to Christ the perfect righteousness of Christ's life and atoning death is put upon that person. Righteousness is imputed to him. Christ is then his righteousness (Jer 23:6; Rom 1:16,17). On that account God justifies that believer (Rom 8:33). The intrinsic righteousness of Christ is itself the ground of justification, not faith, which is the instrument of union with Christ. There is no other way of justification, and nobody can be a Christian without this righteousness.

The only way in which true Christianity can be rescued from the morass of confusion that exists today is to return to what the Bible itself says about what constitutes a Christian. That teaching is not obscure. What then is the NT definition of a Christian? Answer: *We can say with absolute certainty that a Christian is one to whom God imputes the righteousness of his Son and justifies on that account.* There is no possibility of anyone being a Christian who does not have that righteousness. This definition is enshrined in the letter to the Romans.

That a Christian is one to whom God imputes the righteousness of his Son is emphatically and systematically taught not only in Romans, but is maintained consistently by the rest of the N.T. There is only one interpretation of this aspect of the letter to the Romans, and no self-respecting scholar has ever been able to establish that it teaches something different from justification by faith alone. What Romans declares positively, Galatians asserts negatively. Galatians shows that any teacher, even an angel from heaven, who attempts to negate the doctrine of imputed righteousness as the basis of justification, is regarded as anathema by God, and should be so regarded by ourselves.

1 Corinthians chapter one expresses the fact that when all the wisdom of the

Greeks failed, God presented his wisdom. That wisdom was to give us the Messiah, the God-man, in whose person all our needs are met: righteousness, holiness and redemption. Righteousness imputed is our first need. On that basis we receive holiness, and ultimately complete redemption of the soul and body.

The implications of receiving the imputed righteousness of Christ are spelled out for us by Paul in Romans 6. Outward righteousness received by union with Christ must, if it is genuine, be followed by inward righteousness, which we call holiness or sanctification. Any person who does not evidence the holiness of Christ in the practical fruits of righteous living, has no right to claim the external righteousness of Christ which justifies. But those who believe in Christ, and are obedient to his teaching, and share in his sufferings, will assuredly share in his glory (Rom 8:16).

God's way of salvation rules out all self-righteousness. Any religious system which starts out on the line of self-righteousness is doomed to failure. This is the mistake made by the Jews.

> *'Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes' (Rom 10:3,4).*

When Paul says that 'Christ is the end of the law,' he means that complete satisfaction has been made by Christ in fulfilling the law. There is therefore no hope whatever for those who attempt to justify themselves by their own righteousness before God, that is salvation by their own law-keeping. 'No one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law' (Rom 3:20).

Three major conclusions arise out of this biblical teaching as to what constitutes a Christian. The first is that we must maintain consistent tests for discipleship. We must follow the apostolic example in this respect. The second is that we must follow the apostles in rigorously condemning and rejecting all those who betray the truth of the Gospel. The example provided in the Bible, and in the N.T. in particular, with regard to the rejection of false teachers is very clear, frequent and uncompromising. The third is that we must be gentle. We have to make room for weak Christians. We have to follow the N.T. example in distinguishing between false prophets on the one hand, and weak Christians on the other.

Firstly then, it is our responsibility to maintain the same standards for discerning the nature of the Christian as pertained in the N.T. Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ must be evidenced by a way of life consistent with such repentance and such faith. Self-righteousness must be abandoned as the way of justification before God, and God's provision of righteousess espoused. That there is repentance (a change of mind and of life), must be seen. To ascertain this change we may apply tests as we find them in various parts of the N.T., for example, the tests provided in 1 John.

John in his first letter provides five tests by which we can see whether our profession of faith is genuine or not. Firstly, we must believe that Jesus is very God. (All opposing systems such as Muslims, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses rigorously reject this fact.) Secondly, we must love the Christian brotherhood of all those who evidence that they are 'in Christ'. Thirdly, we must love God's law and seek to keep, honour and live by it as a way of life. Fourthly, we should have the inner witness of the Spirit (1 Jn 2:27; 3:24; 4:13). Fifthly there is the test

of worldliness. 'If any one loves the world the love of the Father is not in him' (1 Jn 2:15). This is a clear and strong assertion by which we conclude that if a person is obsessed with a love of this present world, gives only lip service to faith, and consistently neglects worship, prayer, and the spiritual responsibilities of the Christian fellowship of the church as boring and unnecessary, then we do not regard such as a believer. In other words, we do not accept nominal Christianity as an option.

Secondly, we must be prepared to follow the apostles in firmly rejecting teachers who overthrow the gospel. In our age of ecumenism and inter-faith philosophy this is exceedingly unpopular, but this must not daunt us. We must not think we know better than the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in the instructions he has provided with regard to this matter. Paul warned that wolves would arise from inside the Church (Acts 20:30). The reason for Paul writing his letter to the Galatians was because they were threatened by the loss of their faith through those false teachers who had undermined the gospel. God's curse rests on those who destroy the gospel (Gal 1:8). But it is not only Paul who insists on safeguarding the purity of the gospel. Jude and Peter (see 2 Pet 2), make it clear that those who pervert and destroy the gospel are to be regarded as condemned (Jude 4). John forbids us to have anything to do with teachers who claim to be Christian but who deny the gospel (2 Jn 10). The severity of the apostles was not vindictive. They saw clearly that the acceptance of teachings which deny the only gospel of salvation would not only destroy the gospel, but would thereby destroy the souls the gospel is designed to save.

Jesus said that the Pharisees made the truth of no effect by their traditions. Throughout the history of the Church traditions grew and increased, and so destroyed the gospel. The sixteenth century Reformation was a mighty movement of the Spirit of God by which the gospel of justification by faith alone was recovered.

During the last 150 years Liberalism has been a means of destroying the gospel. Liberalism is that movement which has taught that the Bible is not reliable, including the historical facts reported in the Gospels about Jesus' life and teaching. Those like bishop David Jenkins of Durham, who deny the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of Christ, are liberals who have not been disciplined but allowed to continue in the Anglican church. When discipline breaks down in a church it ceases to be a church.[8]

This brings us to the third conclusion, that there are many genuine Christians who are not well-taught and who may be confused about justification by faith. We must be gentle with them, and distinguish between those who deliberately propagate views which destroy the gospel, and those who are truly united to Christ by faith, live godly lives, and yet are not clear in the grasp of the great truths of the N.T. Such believers give evidence of their belonging to Christ by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), and by humility and a willingness to submit to the authority of the Scriptures. They do not set themselves up as teachers and do not attempt to get others to follow false doctrine. The N.T. requires that we discern between weak Christians and false prophets.

1 David L. Edwards, *The Futures of Christianity,* Hodder & Stoughton, 1987, 479 pp., £16.95.
2 *ibid.,* p. 406.
3 *ibid.,* p. 229.
4 *ibid.,* p. 281.
5 *ibid.,* p. 282.
6 *ibid.,* p. 281.
7 *ibid.,* p. 281 ff.
8 The Church of England is so mixed up that we cannot say the whole is no true Church. Each individual local church has to be judged by biblical criteria.

*Drew Garner is the pastor of the Bellaire Reformed Baptist Church, Houston, Texas. In the fourth paragraph he speaks about being 'fired'. Sometimes we use the terms 'sacked' or 'dismissed'. Drew himself went through that experience after he began to preach historic Christianity or the gospel of free grace. Subsequently he was used to plant and establish the church at Bellaire. The purpose of this article is to outline the history of the Sovereign Grace movement among Baptists in the Southern States of the U.S.A. since World War II. Some of our readers may recall pastor Garner's biography of B. H. Carroll (*R.T. *35). Our more refined readers are urged to make allowance for the culture of the deep South especially when they read about Rolfe Barnard whose biography was published in* R.T. *45.*

Free Grace among Baptists in the South

During the early 1950's some traditional Baptists who discovered the doctrine of sovereign grace called themselves 'Sovereign Grace Baptists'. The term 'sovereign grace' referred to God's initiative in the salvation of a person as opposed to man's initiative. Its first use probably grew out of evangelist Rolfe Barnard's famous sermon on Romans 9 at the Sword of the Lord Conference at Tocoa Falls, Georgia in the summer of 1949.

Other Baptists chose the name 'Reformed Baptists' after the popular use of the name in England in the 50's and 60's. The English Baptists identified with the Reformed theology of John Calvin, but not his ecclesiology. In fact, the old Particular Baptist Denomination in England adopted Calvin's theology and soteriology, as opposed to Anabaptists theology and soteriology. Some Baptists used the term 'Grace Baptists'.

Those who discovered sovereign grace became Calvinistic as opposed to Arminian. The doctrines preached were called the 'doctrines of grace' or better known as the five points of Calvinism. The five points are known under the categories of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistable grace, and perseverance of the saints. These truths go under the rubric TULIP. Most Baptists in the early 50's believed only in the last point, one Calvinist tagged them as 'fifers'.

Some Baptist pastors remained in their Baptist Denominations and preached these truths until they were fired, or a group was sufficiently indoctrinated for them to pull out and form a Sovereign Grace church. At other times churches came out of the denomination with their pastor. Independent Baptists had an advantage; only the nature of the church changed. There were no attempts to form another denomination. Contacts and growth came through Bible conferences and the written word. Slowly the movement began to grow.

Before we look at the resurgence of Calvinism after World War II, we must look at the demise of Calvinism before World War II in the Baptist denominations.

In the year 1600 in America there were only four Baptist churches. In the year 1700, there were twenty, ten being in New England. They were all Calvinistic. By the 1730's, Arminianism was coming in like a flood in many denominations. In 1734, Jonathan Edwards at Northampton, Massachusetts, preached a series of sermons on justification by faith. Over three hundred were converted in a six month period. On July 8th, 1741, Edwards preached his famous sermon on 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God', at Enfield, Connecticut. The congregation trembled and cried out. Many were converted. The Awakening began to spread. It was helped by a visit of George Whitefield to New England. The middle states, then the South were touched. Perhaps as many as fifty thousand were converted in little over a year. The Baptists seemed to prosper the most by the Great Awakening.

William Scriven founded a Particular Baptist Church at Kittery, Maine in 1682.[1] During the period of 1684 and 1696 he made several trips to Charleston, South Carolina. During this time he founded, or possibly moved his church from Kittery to Charleston. Baptist churches spread from Charleston. By 1742 the Baptists in and near Philadelphia met and formed an association. They adopted the second London Confession of Faith with two additional articles. This confession is strongly Calvinistic following the Westminster and Savoy confessions of faith.

By 1814 the Baptists had grown immensely. There was a national meeting in Philadelphia that year forming what was called the Triennial Convention of Baptists. This convention was strongly Calvinistic. There was a strong unity of Baptists nationwide. A robust missionary spirit prevailed. No greater stories can be told than the stories of Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice. But by the 1830's an anti-mission spirit arose; giving rise to what has been called the Primitive Baptist churches. This controversy grew out of a right-wing Calvinism that denied means in the conversion of sinners. Great harm was done to missions.

By the 1840's the issue of slavery had entered the churches. There was controversy between the northern churches and the southern churches. The northern churches dominated the mission board. They refused to send out missionaries from the South who owned slaves. As a result, on May 8th, 1845 two hundred and ninety-three messengers from southern churches met in Augusta, Georgia, and formed the Southern Baptist Convention. The first elected president, Williams Bullein Johnson, was a thorough going Calvinist. Most of the churches and pastors were Calvinistic, adopting the Philadelphia confession of Faith of 1742 as their confession. The Convention grew in the South. New associations were formed. They also adopted the 1742 confession. Calvinism was the order of the day.

Now as to the demise of Calvinism among Baptists, especially Southern Baptist Convention churches; it began under the leadership of James Robinson Graves (1820-1893). In 1845 Graves, a native of Vermont, moved to Nashville from Kentucky. He was ordained as a Baptist minister while he was in Kentucky. In

Nashville he became the assistant editor of the magazine *Baptist*. The magazine became his pulpit to propagate his peculiar views. He also presented at a mass meeting on June 24th, 1851 at Cotton Grove, Tennessee what are known as the 'Cotton Grove Resolutions'. The five resolutions are:

1. Can Baptists consistently, with their principles of the scriptures, recognise those societies, not organised according to the pattern of the Jerusalem Church, but possessing a government, different officers, a different class of membership, different ordinances, doctrines and practices, as the Church of Christ?
2. Ought they to be called Gospel churches as churches in a religious sense?
3. Can we consistently recognise the ministers of such irregular and unscriptural bodies, as gospel ministers in their official capacity?
4. Is it not virtually recognising them as official ministers to invite them into our pulpits, or by any other act that would or could be construed into such recognition?
5. Can we consistently address as brethren, those professing Christianity, who not only have not the doctrines of Christ, and walk not according to his commandments, but are arrayed in direct and bitter opposition to them?[2]

These Resolutions were unanimously adopted. By 1854 the thought of Graves was epitomised in his famous sermon, 'Old Landmarkism – what is it?' The concept of the Church (the Church universal with a capital 'C' in contrast to the local churches – editor) as universal as taught in the Philadelphia confession was denied and the local church became the totality of the Kingdom and the Church. The Baptist churches were regarded as the true Church, all others were societies. Baptist churches, it was held, originated with John the Baptist and had a succession until this day. Landmarkism grew by leaps and bounds. Graves himself boasted that all the churches in the South were practically Landmarkers. The great central doctrines of salvation by grace were taking second place. Ecclesiology was more important than theology and soteriology.

The other factor in Landmarkism that led to the demise of Calvinism was the acceptance of the 1832 New Hampshire Confession of Faith by many churches. That Confession was a mild compromise with Arminianism to get a greater acceptance. It was simpler and shorter. By the 1850's and 60's Arminianism was slipping in by the back door. The doctrines of salvation by free grace were being diluted; watered down and made tasteless.

One other factor in the demise of Calvinism in the South must be mentioned. It has to do with the demise of Calvinism in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Dr R. T. Kendall says, 'The high water mark of Calvinism's influence upon the S.B.C. was reached when the first Southern Baptist Seminary was founded in 1859.[3] The first four faculty members – James P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, Basil Manly, Jr., and William Williams were clear cut Calvinists. Boyce had studied

under Charles Hodge at Princeton. He wrote his own theology book called *Abstract of Systematic Theology.* This book was the textbook used in theology courses for years to come, and influenced many young preachers in the south. Boyce also led the Seminary to adopt the 'Abstracts of Principles' to which all seminary professors had to subscribe and sign in order to teach (they are thoroughly Calvinistic). The Seminary remained Calvinistic until World War I.

Dr R. T. Kendall says, 'The conscious turning point away from Calvinism in Southern Baptist theological history occurred during the decisive era of the Southern Baptist theological seminary's fourth president – Edgar Young Mullins (1860-1928).'[4] Mullins was also elected president of the S.B.C. and the Baptist World Alliance. He was a very popular man. He felt that the time had come for Baptists to restate their doctrines. He had lived through the controversy surrounding the third president, Dr Whitsitt. Dr Whitsitt had taught that Baptists did not originate in a line of successionist Baptist Churches from New Testament days. He held to the view that the Baptists of America originated in the Puritan and Separatists Movements in England in the late 1500's. Great controversy arose over this. The Landmarkers in the Convention demanded his resignation. Even B. H. Carroll of the Southwest joined in the chorus. Dr Whitsitt eventually resigned. Dr Mullins followed him as the fourth president.

One of the first things Dr Mullins did was to write a new theology text called, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression.* This book became the new textbook in Systematic Theology replacing J. P. Boyces' *Abstract.* Dr. Mullins new theology became a theology of experience. Experience along with the Bible and tradition became the sources of theology. The end result was the watering down of Boyces' Calvinism. The doctrine of Atonement, 'was for all men'. 'His relation to mankind which has been set forth involves the consequences that he died for all. There are numerous passages of Scriptures which leave no doubt,'[5] he said. At the 1926 S.B.C. meeting Dr Mullins led Southern Baptists to adopt a shortened statement of faith called 'The Baptist Faith and Message'. It was based on the New Hampshire Confession. The downgrade in doctrine was accelerated.

The Liberalism of the 1920's as well as the new methods of evangelism further eclipsed Calvinism. The 'Invitation System' was used by many evangelists, especially Billy Sunday. The emphasis was upon the free will of man. The Fundamentalist movement of the 20's, took minds further away from a full confessional belief to just a few fundamentals.

The Baptists of the 20's and 30's seemed to identify more with the Anabaptists of the 1500's in their emphasis in ecclesiology. A new 'five points' were developed.[5] They are:

1. Primacy of Scripture;
2. Evangelical experience;
3. Autonomy of the local church;
4. Church membership via believers baptism only; and
5. A Honour of religious freedom.[6]

These five points can be referred to by the acrostic 'PEACH'. Dr Mullins ideas had won the day.

Perhaps the evidence of the demise of Calvinism in the S.B.C. is best illustrated in the teaching of Dr Dale Moody. Dr Moody is now retired from teaching Systematic Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. He has been a very popular convention and church speaker. In a prepared statement given to Dr R. T. Kendall for research on his master's thesis he wrote: 'The problem arising in the theology of the Southern Baptist Convention as the result of the influence of Calvinism is clearly a conflict between Biblical exposition and historical tradition. Of the five points of Calvinism, I regard all five of them as being in collision with the Scriptures. On the other hand, I find the five articles of the remonstrants presented by the disciples of James Arminius to the Synod of Dordt in 1618 agreeable with most of the teachings of Holy Scripture.'[7] Dr Moody on a speaking tour in Oklahoma during 1960 lambasted the doctrine of perseverance as not being Biblical. He was taken to task by some Baptists. At least this is the last doctrine to go among Baptists who go into Arminianism.

We might say then that the interest of Baptists today is not theology but Baptist axioms of liberty of conscience, freedom of religion and separation of Church and State. Yet in spite of the demise of Sovereign Grace there have remained pockets of Calvinism in the South. We know that Arthur W. Pink wrote I. C. Herendeen at the Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa, about 1910 asking Herendeen to publish his book on the 'Sovereignty of God'. Pink lived in South Carolina at the time. Herendeen knew nothing of Sovereign Grace at that time. Pink wrote again referring to John 6:44 quoting 'No man can come to me'. Pink had underlined the word *can*. God used that underlining to open Herendeen's heart to grace! He printed the *Sovereignty of God* in 1918 from Swengel, Pennsylvania.[8] The book was not discovered until the 50's.

Pink was a man who never seemed to settle in one place. From South Carolina he moved to California then eventually to Australia, and back to England again. In the period from 1929-1932 he lived in Mortons' Gap, Kentucky. His wife Vera was from this town and maybe that was the reason for the move. Also the pastor, C. D. Cole, was a clear Calvinist. There were other Baptist pastors along with some Landmarkers who were strong Calvinists in Western Kentucky.

There were other Grace preachers in different locales in the South. Evangelist T. T. Martin in the 20's and 30's preached grace all over the South. His brother

M. T. Martin, who saved Mississippi College from bankruptcy during the 20's, was a vigorous grace preacher. A. D. Muse, who pastored the Hearts Harbour Tabernacle in Louisville, Kentucky, learned grace from T. T. Martin, and preached it until his death in 1954. B. B. Caldwell, an evangelist from South Carolina, preached grace until his death in the 60's. Dr George Fletcher from Virginia, who taught at Toronto Baptist Seminary, preached grace for many years. L. R. Shelton preached grace in New Orleans before World War II. E. W. Johnson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, was preaching grace during World War II. Perhaps the last remnant of Calvinism in the main body was in the teaching of Dr W. T. Conner at Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas. He taught there from 1910-1949. He influenced many men, especially Evangelist Rolfe Barnard. His Calvinism can be found in one of his early books entitled *Christian Doctrine.*

The period from the end of W.W.II to 1949 was a quiet period. Those preaching grace did not know about others. If we were to pick a date for the revival or resurgence of sovereign grace we would choose the summer of 1949 at the Sword of the Lord Conference at Tocoa Falls, Georgia, sponsored by John R. Rice. The Conference was dedicated to the promotion of evangelism and soul winning techniques. The speakers that year were Dr Rice, Lee Roberson, Bill Rice, E. J. Daniels and Rolfe Barnard. Barnard was the first speaker on Monday night. When he stood up to preach he asked all the young preachers to open their Bibles to Romans 9 and all the old preachers to keep theirs shut, for they would not believe anything he was going to say. Of course, all opened their Bibles. Barnard preached for one hour on 'Sovereign Grace and Mercy'. By the next morning the Conference was in turmoil. By the middle of the week, Dr Rice asked Barnard to leave the conference. The author of this paper knows at least two people who were present at this conference. One, Mr Fred Simons from Mississippi, who later moved to Knoxville the fall of 1957, introduced the author to the doctrines of grace. Barnard was a teacher of theology at the Piedmont Bible College at Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He returned to the College that fall.

During the Spring of 1950 at Easter all the Southern Baptist churches east of the Mississippi were having simultaneous revivals. (For readers unaccustomed to Southern Baptist terminology revivals here means organised evangelistic campaigns.) All the churches were having meetings at the same time to impact that region of America. Don Wells, the pastor of the Pollard Baptist Church in Ashland, Kentucky, had not secured an evangelist. At the last moment he called Dr Charles Stevens, the president of Piedmont Bible College, and asked him to recommend an evangelist. Dr Stevens said, 'we have here an old evangelist, who teaches theology for us, who knows more about evangelism than any man in America. His name is Rolfe Barnard'. Pastor Wells soon secured the service of Barnard. On April 17th, 1950, Easter Sunday morning, Barnard showed up. Nearly a thousand people were there in their Easter frocks. As Barnard stood up to preach in his unique way, weaving forwards and backwards, he said in a low bass voice, I don't know why I am here, but I'm sure it has something to do with

the fore-ordaining purposes of God. Then he asked, "Can anyone here quote Romans 8:28 for us?" The young assistant pastor, Henry Mahan, stood and quoted the verse leaving out the last phrase. Barnard asked Mahan if that was all he knew of that verse. Mahan said, "yes"! Then Barnard said, "Let me quote the verse for you". He began quoting the verse slowly, "for all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, to those called according to his", then when he came to the word *purpose* he bellowed at the top of his voice that word purpose through the public address system. That rivetted the attention of that Easter Sunday morning crowd. Then he looked at the young Mahan and said, "young man, when you understand the meaning of that word *purpose* you will have the key that unlocks the book of Romans and the whole Bible". Then he proceeded to preach on sovereign mercy that Easter Sunday morning. Many were disturbed. Others said, "we will hear this man again". Henry and his wife Doris studied Romans that week and the Lord opened their hearts to the doctrine of grace.

Rolfe Barnard was born August 4th, 1904, to godly parents at Guntersville, Alabama. He grew up in a S.B. Church. He was supposedly converted at an early age but it proved to be false. The family moved to Texas. At the age of 15 Rolfe entered Hardin Simmons University at Abilene, Texas to study for a law degree. While in College he came to a hardened state of infidelity, often defying God. After graduation he moved to West Texas to become a school teacher. While there, he went to his room one night, and as he would say, fought it out with God, and God won. The first Sunday after his conversion he asked the pastor to let him preach. He was a success. Later he moved to Borger, Texas. Borger was an oil boom town. He began a mission and learned how hard it was to deal with oil field workers. In one day he conducted as many as seven funerals. On October 25th, 1927, he married Hazel Hilliard at Amarillo, Texas. In January, 1928, he enrolled in the Southwestern Baptist School Seminary in Fort Worth, Tx, where he studied under Dr W. T. Connor who taught him the doctrine of grace. Barnard was a brilliant student. Dr Connor offered him an assistants job in theology. Rolfe refused because he wanted to be a pastor and an evangelist. After graduating he spent the 30's at Portales, N.M., Denton, Tx. and Wetumka, Oklahoma. When the war broke out he became a chaplain and served for two years in Missouri. After the war he went into evangelism and evangelism. Around 1948 he became professor of theology in the Piedmont Bible College in Winston-Salem, N.C. It was during this time he made a reassessment of his doctrine and message. He seemed to be tired of trafficking in souls as he would say. He restudied Conner, Strong and Hodge and embraced the Puritans and the Reformers. He came to a settled condition that sovereign grace was the message of the Bible; and began to preach it whenever he got an opportunity. God used him to bring many preachers and churches to the truth. He was often run out of town, persecuted and ignored by the big evangelists with whom he had worked. His influence is known by preachers, especially in N.C., Virginia and Kentucky. He died of a heart attack in Praireville, La. January 21st, 1969, and was buried in Winston-Salem, N.C.

In August 1951 the Pollard Baptist Church in Ashland, Ky., put up a big tent in Central Park, and invited Barnard to come back for a meeting. The tent was packed every night for three weeks. Barnard preached on such subjects as God's electing grace, particular redemption and how God saves sinners. Many were converted, especially church members out of Pollard. Others were alarmed and rebelled against the message. There was a division over the message in the church.

In September 1951, Don Wells the pastor resigned. The church called the assistant pastor, Henry Mahan, to be their pastor. Mahan accepted in September of 1951.

In 1952 Mahan held a meeting in the Christian church of Lewisburg, Pa. John Reisinger was the pastor. While there he met I. C. Herendeen who was a member of the church. They discussed ways and means of promoting the message of grace by the use of literature, especially by A. W. Pink, newsletters and by the organisation of conferences.

In February 1954 pastor Mahan was reading Spurgeon's sermons of 1861, especially the expositions given during the week of the opening of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Mahan had the idea, Why not have a sovereign grace Bible conference dealing with the doctrines of grace, or the five points. He wrote Herendeen telling him of the idea. Herendeen sent a letter with the addresses of all those he had sent a copy of Pinks *Sovereignty of God.* The conference was held in June of 1954. The speakers were Rolfe Barnard, A. D. Muse, B. B. Caldwell, George Fletcher and Clarence Walker. Clarence Walker was the president of Lexington Bible College. He was a robust five point Calvinist. Mahan had spoken at the college and had met men like Norbert Ward and other young men who would be preaching grace. Mahan had written to men to whom Herendeen had sent addresses. A large crowd attended, with people from seventeen states. Some were from as far away as California. Some primitive Baptists showed up as well as Landmarkers and Independents.

In November 1954, A. D. Muse had a conference in Louisville. New men were being discovered. Dr N. B. Magruder, Henry Mahan, and others preached. Dr Muse became ill during the Conference and died two weeks later.

At the Ashland conference, June 1955, new men were on the programme. Dr. Magruder from Louisville, Kentucky, E. W. Johnson from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Ferrell Griswold from Birmingham, Alabama, and Luther Hux from Rocky Mt. North Carolina, were men who had come to the knowledge of sovereign grace, and would go out to spread the truth and start new Bible conferences.

The issue of grace had not been settled in the Pollard church in 1951. The issues raised by Barnard were not accepted by the majority. There was always conflict over the free will of men versus the sovereign will of God. (It was like the

conflict which followed the grace preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ reported in John 6.) This continued until after the 1954 conference. The deacons called for the pulpit to be vacated. When the vote was taken pastor Mahan won by 400-55. Mahan stayed another year and had the 1955 conference. The grace believers and those at enmity to sovereign grace could not find a viable working unity. In September 1955 Mahan resigned and took 47 men and 56 women and some young people with him and formed the 13th St. Baptist Church. They bought land on 13th St., and built an auditorium seating 400. Their first worship service was in November 1956. The church has grown since then and also continued the sovereign grace conferences to this day.

E. W. Johnson became the pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, Arkansas, in 1946. It was then he laid stress on the doctrines of grace. He had been taught by A. D. Muse, but it was not until around 1950 that Rolfe Barnard taught him that these doctrines were of the essence of the Gospel. The church split later over these doctrines with pastor Johnson remaining with the church. In 1957 the church had its first sovereign grace conference. They have continued to this day. Pastor Johnson has also edited the monthly *Sovereign Grace Message* for many years now.

Ferrell Griswold was a speaker in the 1955 Ashland conference. He was a student at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., and the pastor of the First Baptist church of Minor Heights, a suburb of Birmingham. Griswold was an ardent student of the Puritans and a dynamic pulpiteer. The church grew under his ministry and conferences organised by that church were well attended.

Luther Hux pastored for years a Baptist Church in Rocky Mount., N.C. He gathered together many of the pastors who were the fruit of Rolfe Barnard in N.C., Virginia and S.C., in a yearly conference in June. Hux died of cancer in the early 80's.

I have outlined the story in general and referred to the principal personalities in the grace movement. Obviously we can draw many lessons, positive and negative, from the scenario, but that hopefully together with other features of the story, will come at another time.

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2 *ibid.*, p. 142.
3 R. T. Kendall, *The Rise and Demise of Calvinism in the S.B.C.*, (M.A. Thesis University of Louisville), p. 72.
4 *ibid.*, p. 101.
5 Edgar Young Mullins, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal expression* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1917), p. 339.
6 *ibid.*, R. T. Kendall, p. 143.
7 *ibid.*, pp. 139-140.
8 Tape interview with Henry Mahan, March 1st, 1984, Herendeen related this story to Mahan in 1954.

Malaysia

by Stuart Olyott

Last September, at the invitation of Sri Serdang Reformed Baptist Church, my wife and I spent three weeks in Malaysia. Having lived in the country for several years during my childhood, this was a somewhat nostalgic visit for me. Isn't the gift of memory amazing? After 35 years of absence, I found myself able to navigate through a maze of roads and tracks to look at houses in which I lived as a boy.

Sri Serdang Reformed Baptist Church, near Kuala Lumpur, was started by Boom Sing Poh in the early 1980's. Poh, converted during his studies at Liverpool University, works as a lecturer in the nearby Agricultural University. Before leaving Liverpool, he became a member of Belvidere Road Church, and returned to Malaysia with the vision of starting new churches. Five years later 70 people gather on the Lord's Day in a hired upstairs apartment in this new township. The preaching is expository and doctrinally clear. Almost everybody in the church is Chinese and is, or has been, a student. These fine young people will soon be scattered all over the country, and who can tell what good this will do? The church also distributes books and tapes, runs a lively Sunday School amongst local children, is making a consistent effort to evangelise local people, and has already started a new work in a township about 10 miles away.

I visited several other churches and was impressed by the fact that they are almost entirely composed of men and women who are not only young in years, but also very young in faith. But how anxious they are to learn! From early morning to late at night, wherever we were, young Christians surrounded us and asked us questions. Very few of those leading the churches are over 30 years old.

These young churches must witness to the gospel in a country where Islam is increasingly militant. There are new mosques everywhere, built with government funds. It is illegal to try and induce a Malay to change his religion and there are moves to bring about the Islamisation of the legal system. All children, of whatever ethnic or religious background, must be taught Islam in school. Local authorities have forbidden many churches to call themselves anything other than 'centres', so as not to offend Islamic sensibilities. It is almost impossible to put up a new church building in an area where there is a muslim majority. It is illegal to have the Bible in Malaysian, and the few Malay Christians that there are, who are despised and persecuted, have to read their Bible in Indonesian. These restrictions do not apply in Singapore but even there militant Malay muslims have created some difficulties.

Continued overleaf

Mrs. Thatcher and Rehoboam

King Rehoboam was as foolish as his father Solomon was wise. However Solomon's administration had cost the people dear. The burdens had been heavy and Solomon's time and opportunity ran out before an easier era could be ushered in. Jeroboam, a spokesman and leader for the ten tribes of the North, pleaded with Rehoboam for a less harsh regime. Rehoboam's experienced advisors agreed with this plea, 'If you will be kind to these people and please them and give them a favourable answer, they will always be your servants!' (2 Ch 10:7).

Rehoboam must have had a brain of cheese! Unbelievably he preferred the advice of his young and inexperienced counsellors. After the appointed three days Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam to hear this shocking response:

> *My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.*

From that very moment the North was divided from the South and remained so for over four centuries until the return from the exile in Babylon.

Now, let me say, at once, Mrs. Thatcher is

MALAYSIA *(continued)*

All children in Singapore are taught through the medium of English, but this is no longer the case in Malaysia. This means that very few of the young people under 18 or so speak fluent English. Church services everywhere are in English, or in various Chinese dialects, so how is the up and coming generation going to be reached? Speaking Malay, they can neither listen to gospel preaching nor read the Christian books which are available in the country. Fortunately Poh speaks perfect Malay, and is starting an evening service in Malay very soon. But this can be interpreted as an attempt to make Malays change their religion, and will thus probably be declared illegal.

Dr. Poh, despite a responsible university post and growing family responsibilities, pastors a church full of new Christians, distributes books and tapes, writes booklets, travels far and wide to encourage and teach other groups, and counsels late into the night. His church, composed mostly of unearning young people, cannot yet support him financially. It is unthinkable that this key Christian leader, the only Reformed Baptist pastor of his country, should not be able to give himself full-time to his work. If he goes on as he is, he will die of fatigue. Five years of financial support from outside the country would be enough to save the situation. Belvidere Road Church, through its treasurer, will be happy to channel gifts to support him directly to the Sri Serdang Church. The treasurer's address is Mr. John Irvine, 20 Woodlands Road, Liverpool 17.

There are churches in Malaysia and Singapore in a position to support pastors right away. Men from abroad would be more than welcome, though they could not stay for more than ten years in Malaysia. But this would be enough time to train a church and develop new leadership. The men would need to have several years of teaching ministry behind them and be willing to adapt to a trying climate and new culture. I would be happy to correspond in complete confidence with any experienced pastor who is willing to consider either possibility. My address is: Rue du Valentin 30, CH-1004 Lausanne, Switzerland.

not Rehoboam, even though her enemies would make her out to be worse than that. And nor is the South of England, Judah, and all the rest of the U.K. that did not vote for Maggie, the Ten Tribes of Israel.

Two striking parallels however are relevant. The first is that the North-South divide is a very real and potentially dangerous one. The second is that we are living in a time of genuine change. Ours is a new epoch, unique for its technology and its computers, an era crying out to us to think and analyse, adjust and exercise foresight. We simply cannot afford to be stupid like Rehoboam. I will comment on the two parallels.

1. *The North-South divide*

The North-South divide is mostly an economic divide. The North of England, Scotland, Wales and the inner cities voted massively for Labour, in opposition to Mrs. Thatcher. The Conservatives lost every single parliamentary seat in Liverpool, inner Manchester, Glasgow, Leicester and Newcastle upon Tyne. This North-South divide which is basically over economics, investment and employment, reflects a similar divide of cosmic proportions which should agonise the heart of every Christian. Note the contrast between North American affluence, and the squalor of Mexico where the average earning per person is 16 percent of what it is in the U.S.A.: or the difference between White South Africans who have three times more than their black brothers, who in turn have a staggering 20 times more than the average person in Zaire where there are vast resources of minerals, and potential in agriculture, but a seeming total ineptness and corruption in the administration.[1] These economic disparities are not ethnic. For instance the average income of a West German is eight times that of a Turk and five times that of his counterpart in Communist Romania. What causes such disparities?

2. *The new industrial revolution*

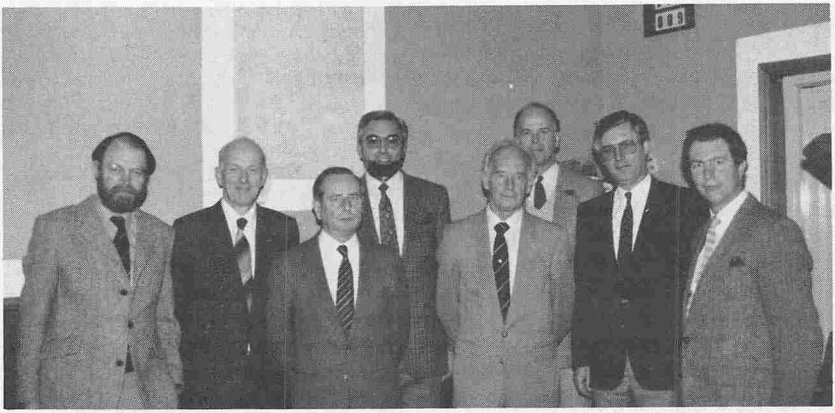
Mrs. Thatcher is the first woman Prime Minister in British history and the first for over a hundred years to be returned to office for a third term. Mr. Kinnock, leader of the Opposition, when he heard the election result held up three fingers, not one for each term but one each for the three million unemployed! Unemployment is an apalling scourge. It is like a war. It kills our young people. The most gifted student in our daughter's class committed suicide at the end of his Y.T.S. (Youth Training Scheme, created by the government to try and deal with unemployment). He committed suicide because he despaired of ever getting a real job. Some argue, rightly or wrongly, that there are three reasons for three million unemployed, namely, recession, the new computer technology, and more people working (many more wives go out to work). Whatever the reasons the fact is that nobody can wave a wand and thereby create real jobs. Promises to tackle the problem could all prove empty.

Mrs. Thatcher has held tenaciously to the idea that prosperity creates employment, and to the belief that Britain therefore must compete realistically with her industrial competitors. 'Five years ago every political pundit was talking about irreversible decline for Britain. For more than half the country that can now be seen to be quite wrong'.[2] Whatever her opponents say the basic principle has worked for the South of England which is prosperous.

The point is that a determined leader and a resolute administration, which wields more power now than before, can now concentrate more on making the North as prosperous as the South. It will take a lot of doing, much investment and much intelligence. For instance, Liverpool was once Britain's second city, but latterly has been regarded as Britain's most run-down city. I see much in Liverpool which is encouraging and which points to resuscitation. As a Christian I want to see prosperity, employment, stability and peace. I want our church to be able to give generously to missions. We want to be able to publish and contribute significantly in propagating the Gospel. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 is highly relevant. 'I urge that intercession be made for all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.' 'Father, deliver us from the like of Rehoboam, and grant leaders to the nations who will receive the wisdom of our Chief Shepherd, the Prince of Peace.'

[1] *Operation World,* S.T.L., will help you make contrasts of your own.

[2] Hamish McRae, writing in *The Financial Guardian,* June 13th, 1987.



David Ellis and the church officers at Cuckfield

The Induction Service at Cuckfield

Saturday, May 16th, 1987 was cup final day at Wembley (in case you had not heard!) and the radio would have you think it was one of the most important days of the year. However as kick-off time approached at Wembley a far more important event was taking place forty or so miles away in Cuckfield, Sussex. On that afternoon a crowded building witnessed the induction of David Ellis as pastor of Cuckfield Baptist Chapel.

Most of the visitors were surprised to see the changes made since their last visit. The members of Cuckfield were simply relieved to see it all done on time! A refurbished Polestub Cottage now houses David, Barbara, Karen and Philippe with a splendid view over the Weald. Behind the chapel stands a large wooden hut well equipped with facilities to serve all who remained after the service for refreshments and indeed to meet the continuing needs of fellowship and outreach.

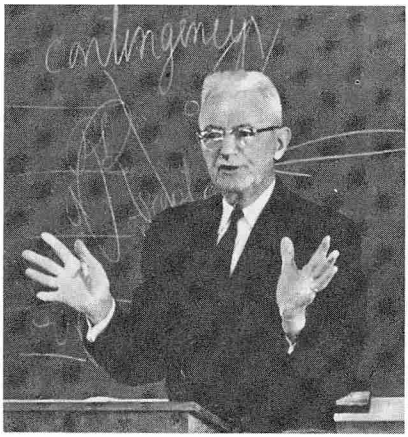
The service was remarkable, lasting nearly 2½ hours, though it did not seem that long. The climax was the straightforward but comprehensive preaching of Pastor Paul Appere of Paris from 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15. He outlined the society Christ was building as a society characterised by order, peace and love. Monoglot English preachers were left envious of their French brother as he spoke in immaculate English! Earlier Erroll Hulse, the former pastor, exhorted David Ellis and the members to maintain their zeal – for evangelism, for pastoral care, for biblical worship and for unity not only within the church but with like-minded churches.

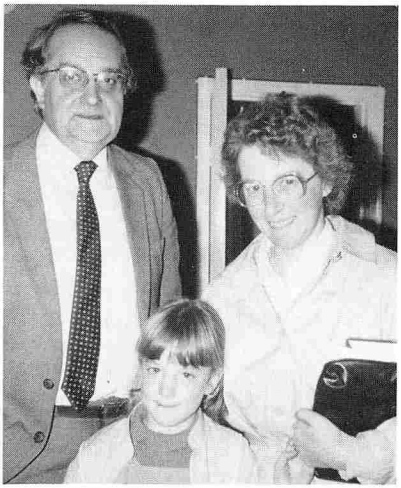
The Church Secretary, David Guthrie had outlined the history of the call and David Ellis had responded indicating clearly the path he intended to take in order to be faithful to the Word of God. There is always something deeply moving about such a declaration – hearing a man publicly affirm in the presence of God his holy intentions.

We felt privileged to have been part of the afternoon's events. The glory of Wembley has already dimmed. The significance of Saturday May 16th and the days ahead at Cuckfield? – this is eternal. All will be revealed on the day of Christ. Our prayer is that what happened at Antioch may happen at Cuckfield and in many other places. '. . . The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord' (Acts 11:21).

A.W.

Lively lecturer, Cornelius Van Til. Austin Walker describes his experiences as a student who benefited from Dr. Van Til's lectures. See page 9.





Dick and Rosemary Eccles and youngest daughter Bethan. See report, front inside cover.

THE CAREY CONFERENCE FOR MINISTERS
Liverpool, January 5th-7th, 1988

We are drawing near to the 300th anniversary of the 1689 Confession. The purpose of the conference will be to strengthen our foundations, majoring on the major truths. Due to seminary commitments Tom Nettles will not be able to come in January as was suggested in *RT* 97, but the subject, 'How Baptists have united or associated in the past', is most relevant, and we have to work to have Tom Nettles with us on a later occasion. Subjects from the 1689 Confession are at present being reviewed, namely chapter 1 (Holy Scripture and Prophecy), and chapters 2, 4, 6, 9, 15, 17, 19 and 22. Donald Macleod has promised to help us with two of these.

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